

April 4, 2008

**Obey HELPS RECOGNIZE MERRILL HS DEBATE TEAM**

*Calls On Students To Stay Informed And Involved*

MERRILL, WI - Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) joined with Church Mutual and the local community to recognize the Merrill High School Debate Team today.

“Whether you are in private life or public life, the ability to communicate is crucial. And it is all about relationships between husband and wife, father and daughter, coach and team, legislator to legislator, or a President to the entire country,” Obey told the Merrill students.

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With your experience, you have a leg up in knowing how to reach other people.

But remember, you don't necessarily win an argument by showing you are the biggest “smarty-pants” in the room.

But if your communications skills and your heart can convey that you are the most thoughtful and solid person in the room, you will go along way and you will get there for the right reason.”

Obey also asked the team to pay attention to politics. "I know a lot of people don't like politics, but as my good friend John Hume, who received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work on behalf of political reconciliation in Northern Ireland, said recently, 'In Democracy, politics is precious because it's a substitute for war.'

I know all of you will be preoccupied with the choices and challenges that you have in your own lives, but please remember; Democracy is not a sideline sport. Democracy cannot function if individual citizens don't meet their obligations by being informed enough about the basic choices that their country and its leaders will need to be making," Obey said.

"So please, pay attention to those choices.

And please don't just look at every issue in terms of how it affects you.

Please think about how it affects your neighbors, too."

"If you do that," Obey concluded, "you'll be better off; and so will your country."

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